



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

## **1350.0 - Australian Economic Indicators, Jan 2010**

ARCHIVED ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 23/12/2009

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE BUSINESS LONGITUDINAL DATABASE**

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##### **Introduction**

The Business Longitudinal Database (BLD) is a valuable resource that will allow analysts to study the impacts of policies and industry trends on Australian businesses at the firm level. It complements the large range of ABS macro-economic outputs and meets demand from government, academics and other users for micro-economic data. It will enhance understanding of:

- the activities or factors that are relevant to business performance; and
- the business characteristics that are associated with these activities or factors.

The BLD contains both business characteristics and financial information of small to medium businesses in Australia. It is an overlapping panel where the first wave of panel data was collected for the 2004-05 reference period and three years data are available. Australian Bureau of Statistics recently released its first wave of BLD data for public access.

##### **Accessibility of BLD Data**

The BLD is made available through a Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF), which is released with the approval of the Australian Statistician. To ensure micro-data confidentiality is maintained, access is managed in a unique virtual environment, the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL). Further information is available at the CURF Microdata Entry Page on the ABS website.

##### **Timeliness**

The sample design involves the use of panels that represent the Australian business population at the point in time that each is initiated into the BLD. Panel One is representative of the in-scope business population as at 30 June 2005. Panel Two is representative of the in-scope business population as at 30 June 2006. Each Panel is directly surveyed once a year for a period of five years. In this current edition of the BLD CURF, Panel One contains three reference periods of data (2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07) and Panel Two contains two reference periods of data (2005-06 and 2006-07).

##### **Relevance**

The Business Longitudinal Database 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07 CURF is only available as an expanded CURF accessed via the RADL. The aim of the BLD is to produce a reliable longitudinal dataset of both characteristics and financial data that will allow analyses of changes in the performance of a cohort of small and medium businesses over time. The BLD is specifically designed for longitudinal purposes and not to produce accurate cross-sectional/population information.

Some of the key data items on the BLD CURF include:

- General Business characteristics - Industry division, Business size (based on employment), number of locations, whether a business is home-based, and length of operation.
- Employment - Total; full/part time; casuals; pay setting arrangements
- Basic financial indicators - value of sales and capital/non-capital purchases
- Innovation indicators - type and status of innovative activity
- Information Technology indicators - use of Internet, web presence, Internet commerce
- Market and Competition: geographic markets, sources of income, customer relations, number of competitors and market share.
- Business financing - type, status and reasons for finance
- Barriers to business performance

Further information on the BLD can be found on the ABS website under:

8168.0.55.001 - Business Longitudinal Database, Expanded CURF, Australia, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07

[8168.0.55.002 - Business Longitudinal Database, Expanded CURF, Australia, Technical Manual, 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07](#)

This edition of Australian Economic Indicators features two articles which both use data from the BLD.

## Further Information

For further information on the Business Longitudinal Database please contact Tala Talgaswatta on Canberra (02) 6252 5376 or email <[tala.talgaswatta@abs.gov.au](mailto:tala.talgaswatta@abs.gov.au)>.

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This page last updated 28 January 2010

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